

BRANCHING OUT

Creating Connections to End Sexual Violence

Summer 2008

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Goodbye...for now!

By Terri DeWalt



It was nearly seven years ago to the day that I started working at SAS. At that time SAS was a small one FTE program struggling to establish itself. I joined a handful of committed volunteer Advocates, and under the guidance of Lana DeVinny, attempted to do what seemed impossible at the time: help establish a program. I was told that I was the Coordinator of a "Sexual Assault Service Provider" (SASP) and that these types of programs are commonly called rape crisis centers and that it was my job to help be the voice for sexual assault victims in Racine County. I was told that these types of programs had been around for over 20 years in some counties in Wisconsin, but that Racine's program was just 2 years old. I was told that it was my job to ensure that a crisis line was available 24 hours a day for anyone who needed help or support regarding a sexual assault

issue. And I was told that it was my responsibility to make sure that there was a team of advocates available to respond to the hospital 24 hours a day to provide support to those who were just victimized. I learned that it was a task of mine to make sure that we provided counseling, support groups and legal advocacy to victims. I was told it was my responsibility to help raise the community's awareness of the issues of sexual violence. And I was told that I was the fifth person in those two years to attempt to complete those tasks.

During the first months on the job I remember feeling very overwhelmed. I was typically on-call 15 out of 30 days a month. I often found myself spending hours in the hospital in the middle of the night to go home and wake up the next day to put in a full day of work. It seemed as if the task before me was impossible and that I, like the others before me would have to leave the program before it was up and running. And then something miraculous happened. I held my first volunteer training, and a roomful of people came. I remember looking around the room and feeling a swell of emotion, relief and gratitude. Somehow, out of the woodworks of Racine County, the room was filled with people willing to be on-call, and be awoken in the middle of the night to drive through the darkness to the hospital to sit with someone during their time of need. As I looked at those people I felt a glimmer of hope and I thought to myself, if these ten people are willing to help, maybe we can do this. Since that time I have been honored to work with dozens of the most generous, courageous and amazing volunteers.

Soon after that training we began to receive more money to hire other staff workers and before I knew it I was working alongside a dedicated and passionate team of staff members who cared about ending sexual violence as much as I did. As I sat in a staff meeting one day I found myself impressed and amazed at the ability, intelligence and creativity of the people around me. It was at that time that I knew that the program was going to be okay. And it is because of that team of workers that I now feel confident to

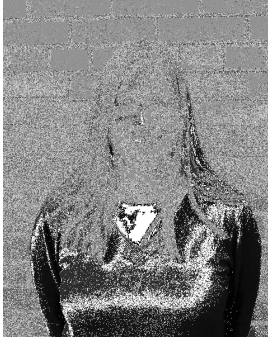
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Face To Face

By Lora Schultz Reinders

All of us as parents want our children to talk to us. We want them to be able to open up to us and feel comfortable talking to us. We especially feel this way about the dangers our children face. These dangers include things like drugs and alcohol, peer pressure, and, of course, sexual abuse. So what are some things parents can do to make it easier for children to talk to them?

First parents need to *teach them*. As parents, we teach our children many things we know will help them prepare for their future and how to be productive members of society. We make sure they learn their math and science. We typically fail, however, to teach them how to lead healthy sexual lives. Many parents approach this as something their child will just “figure out” when the time is right. Besides, sex has nothing to do with children anyway right? This hands off approach leaves our children vulnerable, both to predators who would take advantage of them and vulnerable to unhealthy sexuality in the future.

So where do we begin? What is the right age? Just as in all topics we wish to teach our children, we can start from the beginning with things that are age appropriate, and increase the complexity of what we teach as our child ages. I suggest you begin in the bathtub. No more “wee wees” and “pee pees” for babies and toddlers. What are we teaching our children when we name an elbow and a nose, but call a vagina “down there?”

Throughout your child's growth they will give you plenty of opportunities to *teach them*. The unfortunate truth is that often our children give us the opportunity but we don't take it. When a child hears a song on the radio or conversation on the TV show discussing some sexual matter and they ask us “what does that mean?” How do you respond? Do you take the opportunity to *teach them*? Certainly what you say will depend on how old the child is. The important thing to remember is that you always give them the truth.

In addition to teaching them we need to show our children that *we can handle it*. Children often keep things from us because they are afraid of our reaction. They are afraid we will get mad or sad or yell or cry. How we react when difficult things come up shows our children whether or not we can *handle it*. This again goes back to how we react when these topics come up. For example: your child gets off the bus and asks you “mom, what's a whore?” You look shocked and shout: “where did you hear such a nasty word, don't ever let me hear that come out of your mouth again!” You have just diminished the chances that your child will come to you with such questions in the future and served to show your child you *can't handle it*. Remaining calm and neutral is important in allowing our children to feel comfortable talking to us. Children do not want to upset their parents. They do not want to do things that are “bad.” If we are able to show our

children we will not overreact, it will make it easier for them to talk to us.

It is never too late to start. Even if a parent's reactions have been less than perfect in the past, beginning now to *teach them* and show them you *can handle it* will serve to build better communication and hopefully make it easier for your child to open up to you when needed. Oftentimes our society teaches children things at a much faster rate than parents are comfortable with. It is a parent's job to make sure the information is accurate and filled with the right messages. This helps a child feel positive about his or her own sexuality and know when things don't feel right.

— Lora

SAS Wish List

- Volunteer Advocates!
- Gift cards/certificates from Target, Office Depot or other discount stores
- Courage to Heal book series
- New clothes for victims at the hospital (t-shirts, sweat pants, underwear, etc.)
- Gift bags filled with body lotions & shower gels to be given to victims at the hospital
- General art and craft supplies

Now Open: Racine County Child Advocacy Center

June 16th of 2008 marked a significant day for the Racine community. It was on this day that the Child Advocacy Center was officially up and running. The past few years have been full of challenges and rewards. As a result of the hard work and determination of this multidisciplinary team of social workers, members of law enforcement, health care professionals and legal representatives victims of child maltreatment now have a safe place to begin to heal from trauma.

The focus of the Child Advocacy Center is to engage in comprehensive assessments of suspected child victims of abuse and neglect. Specially trained staff are available to provide forensic interviews, medical examinations and family advocacy. All members of this unique team work together with law enforcement and human services to surround the child and his or her family with support, resources and advocacy.

In addition to providing interviews, medical examinations, and family advocacy under one roof, the Child Advocacy Center has one other unique contribution. This system inspires all community members and professionals who are involved in the lives of children to improve safety and to address barriers to service delivery.





Legislative Update Corner

By Vicki Biehn

This past legislative session was a successful one for survivors of sexual assault. The legislature passed the compassionate care for rape victims, secured money for SAFE funding, drafted anti-human trafficking laws, and made housing laws that are more supportive to victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking.

This column of *Branching Out* is dedicated to providing you with information on the current activities of the state legislature. However, right now the legislature is on break and therefore there is not much to report on. As a result, I would like to take this time to share with you some information about an exciting web site. The web site is called Wisconsin Eye: Watch Who We Are. Their mission is to present an independent, statewide view of civic life and public policy discussion, beginning with nonpartisan, gavel-to-gavel coverage of state government in Madison, both on the air and on the internet. They have put cameras in all three branches of the government-legislative, executive and judicial. These cameras record floor sessions and hearings. They also cover oral arguments in the Wisconsin Supreme Court and events in the Governors and Attorney General's conference rooms.

I would like to encourage you to take a look at their web site, which is www.wisconsineye.org. They have a wealth of information, including their mission statement, goals, coverage, resources, etc. I feel that one interesting and important service that they provide is their video coverage. This is where one can go and see how the legislature debated a particular bill. With the video one can see how or if their representative shared their thoughts and feelings about a certain bill. If you go to the web site and click on the video archives one can look back to see what happened over the past year or two in all areas of the government. There are videos that show past Wisconsin Supreme Court arguments to full floor sessions to committee sessions in the senate and assembly. There are also exit interviews where one can look and see an interview that a representative did after they left public office.

The Wisconsin Eye is just one more way to stay informed about what is happening in our state government.

— Vicki

Call For Submissions...



If you are a survivor or you know a survivor who would like to submit a poem, short story, artwork or editorial for publication in this newsletter, please email it to Samantha Sustachek (ssustachek@lsswis.org).



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step away from SAS knowing that it is in capable hands. As I am ready to embark on my next adventure working as a predoctoral intern at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, I feel certain that SAS will continue to grow and provide the support to sexual assault survivors in our community that they need and deserve.

As I am reflecting on the work I have done in Racine County, I want to thank the many community professionals I have worked with along the way. I have benefited from the knowledge and insight of many of you, including members of the medical profession, members of law enforcement, the District Attorney's and Victim/ Witness Offices, members of the Human Services Department, the educational system and the various amazing non-profit programs in Racine County. I am grateful and appreciative of the work you do and all that you have taught me.

With this edition of *Branching Out*, I am excited to introduce to you, Katy Adler, the newly hired SAS Coordinator. As you will read about in the coming pages and see in the coming months, Katy comes to us with a wealth of knowledge and passion for ending sexual violence and is ready and eager to take SAS to the next level of development. I am confident that you all will be as impressed with her as I have been. Until we meet again!

— Terri



Meet Katy!

My name is Katy Adler and I am joining Sexual Assault Services as Program Coordinator. I am taking Terri's place, and even though I know that she will be missed by many at SAS and in the community, I am excited to continue the progress that she has already made with the program.

I completed my undergraduate work at Marquette University, where I received a B.A. in Psychology. I went from there to Illinois State University, where I received a Masters of Science in Clinical-Counseling Psychology. My interest in sexual assault and working with survivors began when I volunteered for a sexual assault and dating violence hotline for students at Marquette, and continued throughout my graduate education as I researched sexual assault and attitudes toward survivors. During my clinical internship at a rural mental health center in Clinton, Illinois, I developed a passion for counseling, and I am eager to continue this work at SAS.

I am originally from Franklin, Wisconsin, and I currently live there with my rascal of a cat, Buster. In any free time that I have, I like to camp, fish, travel, and I love to read, which often leads me to the problem of starting too many books at once.



Helping Hands

By Samantha Sustachek

At Sexual Assault Services, we pride ourselves on having a fantastic group of volunteer advocates, so in this edition of *Branching Out*, "Helping Hands" would like to spotlight one of our newest volunteers: Cathy Yonker.

Cathy found out about volunteer opportunities at SAS through Shelley Farr, who works in our sister program SCAN (Stop Child Abuse and Neglect). Cathy met Shelley when their daughters were playing basketball together in high school, so when Cathy was looking for a volunteer opportunity that would allow her to directly interact with people, she asked Shelley, and Shelley suggested SAS. Cathy filled out an application and came in for training. She states, "Once I went through the training program, I knew I wanted to give it a try."

Cathy was trained in September of 2007, so she has been a SAS volunteer for less than a year. However, she calls herself our "experienced rookie," since she responded to the hospital during her very first on call shift in November of 2007. She then went on to respond to the hospital during her next two on call shifts in December and January. Miraculously, she decided to keep volunteering, (we were afraid she was beginning to feel overworked!) and she has become one of our most consistent and reliable volunteers.

SAS volunteer advocacy can be difficult at times. Cathy admits to being "nervous about being on call," because although she has had quite a bit of experience working with survivors over the past nine months, "each hospital visit is different and each phone call is unique." When asked what challenges her most about being a SAS advocate, Cathy confesses, "I had originally thought that being a volunteer for SAS would hit my heart a bit too hard. But although I am saddened each time I interact with a victim, Sam taught me well! When the phone rings I hear her words from the training classes, 'You are not responsible for solving all of the victims' problems; you are there to provide compassionate support and to provide them with information to help them through this experience.'"

Although Cathy has volunteered consistently over the years, SAS is her only current volunteer activity. However, she keeps herself busy in plenty of other ways. At the beginning of July, Cathy celebrated her 21st anniversary with S.C. Johnson, where she is an Executive Assistant in Worldwide RD&E. She enjoys painting ceramics, making beaded rope jewelry, crocheting, sewing, making ribboned headbands, and reading. On top of all that, she makes time for family. She has been married for 26 ½ years, and she and her husband have two children and "two very misbehaved Yorkies named Archie & Howard." (You can see them run on the treadmill if you search "Archie and Howard" on Youtube.)

Cathy also describes one of her more unique habits. "One thing I've been doing for fun for the last ten years or so is that I buy breakfast for the person behind me in line at the McDonald's drive-thru every Friday morning. (I did it anonymously for years, but in 2004 someone figured out who I was!) It's something I look forward to every week! I encourage everyone to do this just once – pay for their breakfast and drive away! It's a hoot!" So if you are lucky enough to be behind Cathy in the drive-thru, you may just find yourself with a free breakfast some day!

About SAS, Cathy states, "I would like to say that I am very impressed with the services that SAS provides to Racine County. I am blown away that 365 days a year, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, there is someone available to help sexual assault victims. Being even a small part of that is pretty cool!" And while Cathy is impressed with SAS, SAS is impressed with Cathy. Whether she is responding to survivors at the hospital, hosting one of our monthly advocate breakfasts in her home, or donating homemade treats to our annual Take Back the Night, Cathy is more than just a small part of our program. Volunteers like Cathy are the heart of what SAS does for the community, and for that we are very grateful!

— Sam

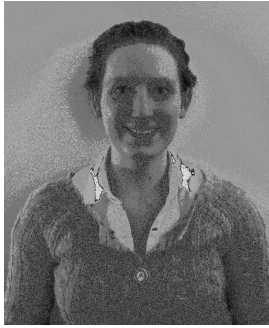
Volunteer Training

Would you like to join the SAS team of Volunteer Advocates? Do you know of someone who would make a great volunteer? If so, we have an opportunity coming up very soon! SAS is currently recruiting community members for our next training. Sessions will be held on September 8th and 17th from 5-8:30 p.m. and September 13th from 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. For more information or to sign up for the training, please contact Samantha Sustachek at 262-619-1634 or ssustachek@lsswis.org.



SAS Second Quarter Statistics April—June 2008

Crisis Line Calls.....	71
Racine Hospital Visits.....	16
Burlington Hospital Visits.....	0
Legal Advocacy Sessions.....	7
New Counseling Clients.....	19
Counseling Sessions.....	147
Community Presentations.....	27



Prevention Connection

By Lynn Cook

Engaging Men in the Movement Against Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is an issue that affects each and every community. The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault reports that 1 in every 4 females and 1 in every 6 males will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime (2004). Each of these survivors has friends and family members that may be subsequently and profoundly impacted by these crimes. Even those who are not personally affected by sexual violence can feel its presence in many ways.

In the past, due to the high rate of sexual victimization of women, efforts to reverse this trend have been focused on teaching women to protect themselves and to speak up about their experiences. Great strides have been made through these efforts to raise awareness about these issues and to advocate for change as women all over the world have united for this cause. As we continue to search for ways to create safer communities for generations to come, the area of sexual violence prevention must be addressed in new and creative ways.

The Center for Disease Control also indicates that just as gender is a risk factor for being a victim of sexual violence it is a risk factor for perpetration as well (2007). Research shows that over 90% of these crimes are committed by men (WCASA, 2001). The men who do not condone or engage in this type of violence are the brothers, fathers, husbands and boyfriends of women at risk. It is these men, the ones that do not necessarily fit into the definition of victim or perpetrator, that hold the most power to change a culture that contains such atrocities and they continue to be a great untapped resource within this movement. These changes may begin to occur through day-to-day interactions between community members. Men can show support by asking others around them how they have been affected by sexual violence. They can also become more conscious of media messages and images that reinforce harmful stereotypes about gender. Telling a friend that a sexist comment is not appreciated may be one small thing that can make a huge impact among peers.

So, how do we engage more men in the activities of prevention? We can start by providing our schools and community centers with educational groups that are structured to create an environment in which it is socially acceptable for males to be advocates. Discussions about gender, peer pressures, media, and barriers to speaking up can be facilitated within the places where children and adolescents are most involved. Sexual Assault Services (SAS) of Racine has begun to provide a group, entitled "Making the Peace" to males at local middle and high schools with this focus in mind. Media campaigns can also be implemented to reinforce the encouragement and social acceptance of these changes.

In addition to the school-based groups, SAS has distributed posters within area schools and community centers highlighting how men can be strong and empowered without overpowering others or resorting to violence in relationships. Community male role models, in addition to the men already engaged in these efforts, will continue to play an important role in this type of prevention. In order to see real, profound changes in our community each of us must get involved. For more information on how you can be an advocate for sexual violence prevention, obtain posters, or get a "Making the Peace" group started at your school or community center call me, Lynn Cook, at 262-619-1634 x 18.

— Lynn

Western Racine County Corner

By Vicki Biehn

One of the most important crisis response services Sexual Assault Services provides is when a trained volunteer Advocate responds to the hospital to provide support to a sexual assault survivor after she or he has been assaulted and is getting medical treatment and forensic evidence collected. Studies show that there is a positive effect on a survivor's rate of recovery when a survivor receives non-judgmental and compassionate support during their initial disclosure. As a result, it is vitally important that survivors of sexual assault in Racine County are supported when they first disclose their sexual trauma.

We are fortunate that there are two hospitals in Racine County that have a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program. The SANE program in Racine is at Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare-All Saints and the SANE program in Burlington is at Aurora's Burlington Memorial Hospital. Although it is wonderful that there are two teams of trained SANE nurses in Racine County, this results in a unique challenge for Sexual Assault Services. The challenge is that we are responsible for providing two teams of Volunteer Advocates who can respond to each of these hospitals within approximately 30 minutes. Therefore, many of our volunteers who live in Racine live too far from Burlington to respond to Burlington in a reasonable amount of time, and vice versa.

Although Sexual Assault Services is always looking for more Volunteer Advocates to respond to either hospital, at this point we are in a great need for Advocates who can respond to the Burlington Memorial Hospital. The Advocates who respond to the Burlington Hospital do not answer the crisis line but only respond to the hospital as needed. Our Western Racine County Volunteer Advocates do not need to be "stationed" in an office to be on-call, as Burlington Memorial Hospital simply calls or pages them if a victim comes in. Our Advocates simply live their normal lives and respond to the hospital if, and when, they are needed. Our next Advocate training is planned for September, so if you or someone you know would be a good Volunteer Advocate for Western Racine County please call me, Vicki at 262-763-6226 ext 31. If you live in eastern Racine County and are interested in volunteering, please contact Samantha at 262-619-1634 ext 14. Thank you for considering volunteering your time and compassion to a person in need.



Sexual Assault Services
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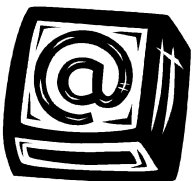
Contact Us!

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1220 Mound Ave. Suite 304
Racine, WI 53404
262-619-1634

SAS Burlington Office
480 S. Pine St.
Burlington, WI 53105
262-763-6226 Ext. 31

24 Hour Crisis Line: 262-637-SAFE (7233)

Stay Connected!



Join our News and Events email update list! Would you like to receive information on upcoming SAS events and volunteer opportunities? Email Samantha Sustachek at ssustachek@lsswis.org with "SAS news and events" in the subject line and she will include you in all SAS news and events related emails.

Sexual Assault Services seeks to create a safe and compassionate environment to help promote the healing of sexual assault survivors and their support people.

